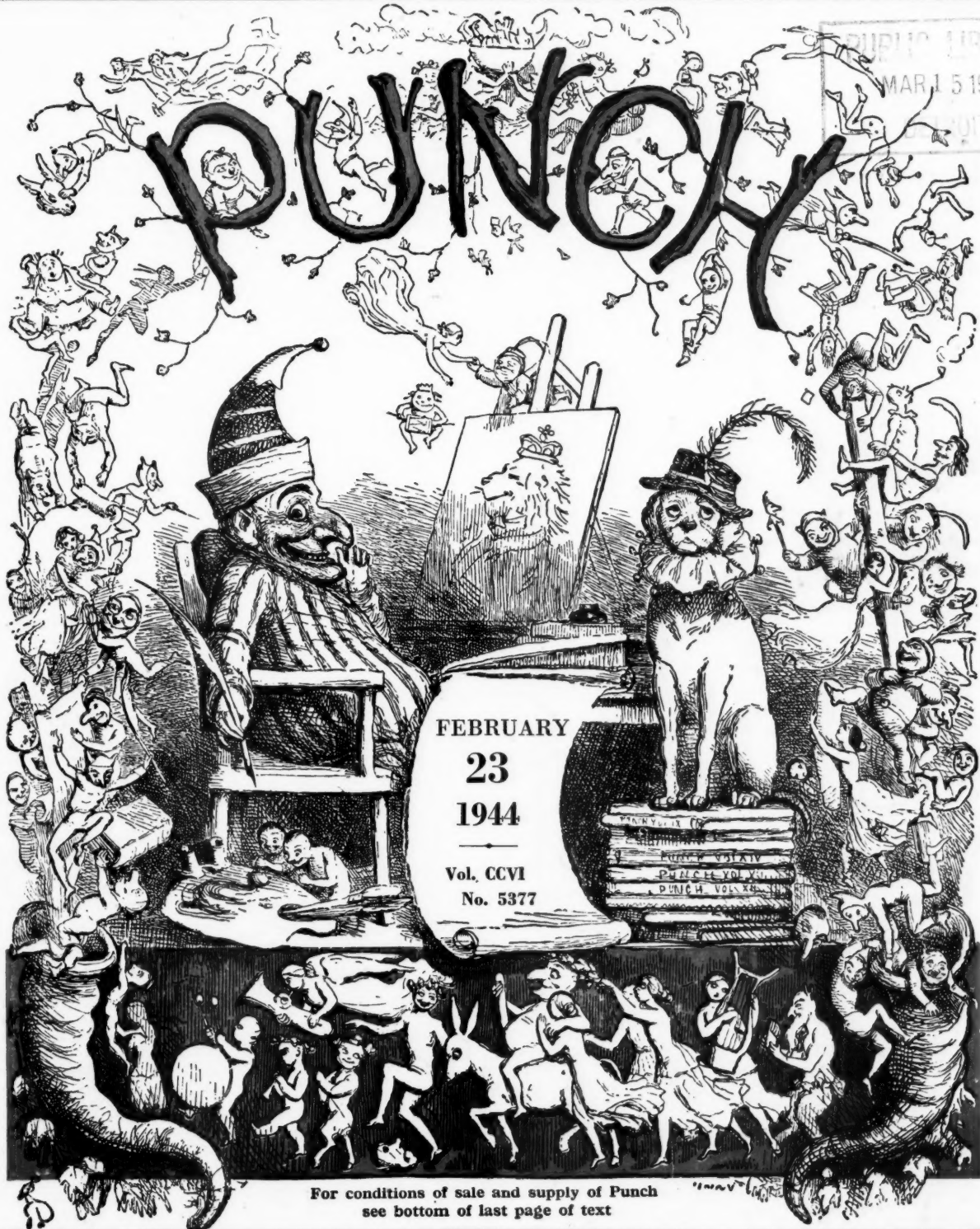


The Best
by far

HUNTLEY & PALMERS BISCUITS

in Peace
or War

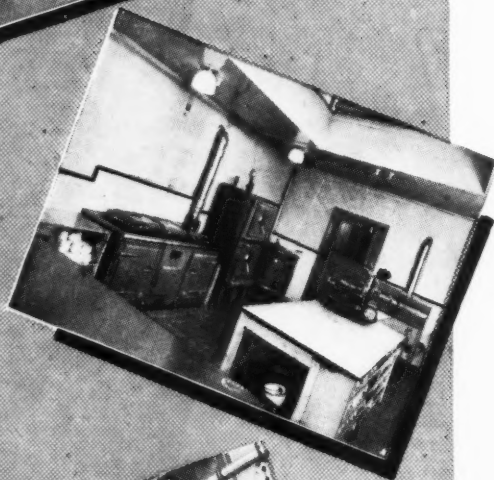
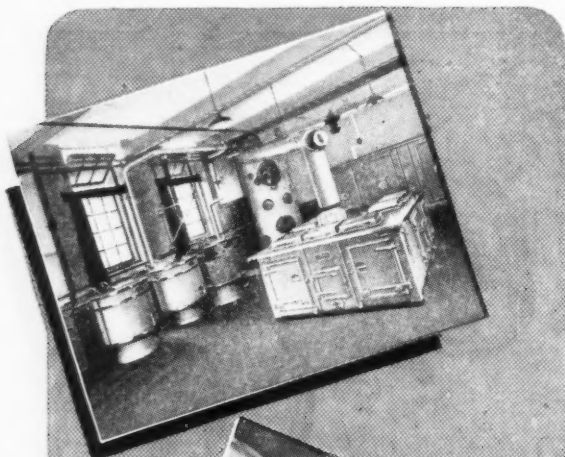


For conditions of sale and supply of Punch
see bottom of last page of text



Player's Please





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One of the sensible models of Liberty



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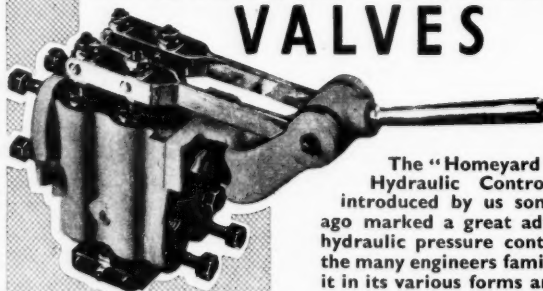
You get there quicker if you walk with Liberty—the smartly exclusive and wonderfully comfortable shoes. They will last longer, look better, and give real liberty to your feet. Most good footwear retailers get quotas, and newer, smarter styles are always coming out. Ask for the last models from Liberty.

Liberty Shoes Ltd.
LEICESTER



P.1

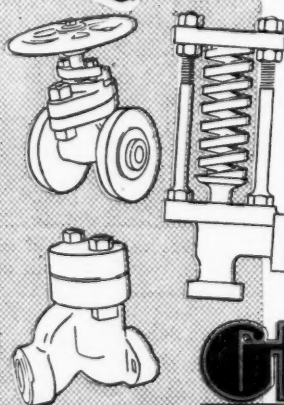
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The "Homeyard" Patent Hydraulic Control Valve introduced by us some years ago marked a great advance in hydraulic pressure control, and the many engineers familiar with it in its various forms and applications agree that it comes very near to being the ideal hydraulic control valve.

This claim, so often made, is rarely so fully justified.

Our technical publication "Modern Hydraulic Control Valves" gives details of "Homeyard" Valves, Stop Valves, Check Valves, Reducing and other Hydraulic Valves made by us. Copies of this publication will be sent to responsible enquirers post free on request.



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GLENFIELD AND KENNEDY LIMITED KILMARNOCK

in **GREEN**
packets

This good cigarette
is welcomed every-
where. Cool,
smooth and mild—
yet deeply satisfying.
It has no cork tip—
that's why it is called
Craven PLAIN.

**Craven
PLAIN**

In **GREEN** packets 10 for 1/2 20 for 2/4

Carreras Ltd., 150 Years' Reputation for Quality **EP** P. 15.



Mr. Frean can hardly believe that he's been temporarily banished from the North of England, but as Mr. Peek says, it's all for the best, as this zoning scheme saves transport and helps to win the war. There are limited supplies of Vita-Weat in the South of England and Mr. Peek and Mr. Frean hope that you will get some from time to time to help keep you fit and cheerful.



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PEEK FREAN'S CRISPBREAD

Made by Peek Frean & Co. Ltd., makers of famous biscuits

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Spa treatment for Rheumatism has been recognised for many years as one of the most satisfactory methods of combating this insidious disease. Even a mild attack means pain and reduced working capacity, and you should act at once, before Rheumatism gets a stranglehold on your system. To-day, a course of treatment at a Spa is out of the question for most people, as neither time nor money can be spared. 'Alkia' Saltrates, however, may be described as a Spa treatment in your own home. It has the essential medicinal properties of seven world-famous Spas and similar beneficial effects as a course of drinking the Spa waters. A teaspoonful of 'Alkia' Saltrates in warm water before breakfast each morning will soon relieve the pain, and, taken regularly, dissolves impurities in the blood stream and eliminates them from the system, thus helping to prevent regular attacks of Rheumatism. A bottle of 'Alkia' Saltrates costs 3/9d., including Purchase Tax. Get a bottle to-day from your chemist and begin your Spa treatment to-morrow morning.

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FOR PROTECTION OF THE SKIN



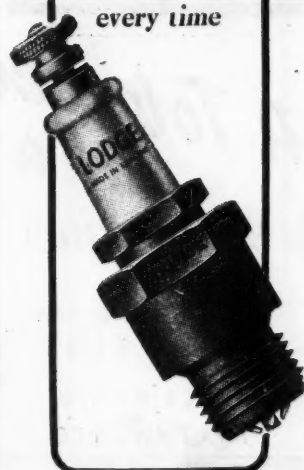
In the interests
of Public Health

*always
wash
your hands
before meals
with*

WRIGHT'S
Coal Tar Soap
1 tablet • 1 coupon

*If
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could choose
its own
sparkling plugs,
it would
unhesitatingly
plump for*

LODGE
every time



'Absence makes . . .

Well, you know the rest. Fortts BATH OLIVER Biscuits are still on sale in the shops. But supplies are restricted owing to wartime conditions. When peace is here you will again be able to have all you want.

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BISCUITS

BY APPOINTMENT TO THE LATE KING GEORGE V

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INTO BATTLE

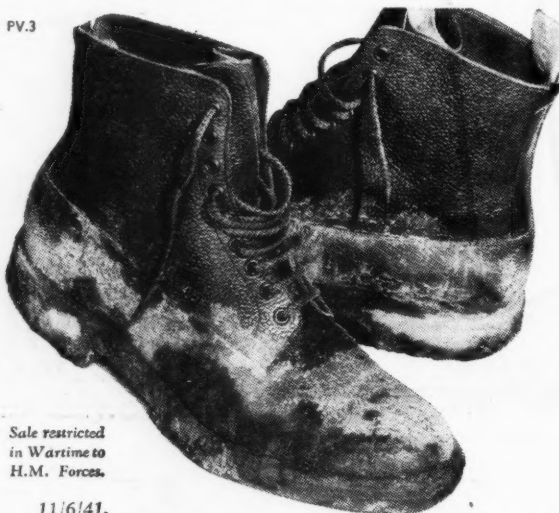


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3d. to 6d.
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SHOE & BOOT LACES

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Sale restricted
in Wartime to
H.M. Forces.

11/6/41.

I purchased a pair in 1920. I first used them for farm work, then on and off for gardening and riding. For some time they lay neglected in the garage, then six months ago I had them re-soled and they are once again trusty friends in regular harness.

LOTUS
Veldtschoen
GUARANTEED WATERPROOF



ANYHOW, I DID GET MY
WILKINSON'S LIQUORICE ALLSORTS

The
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Finest
Scotch Whisky

Old Scotch Whisky

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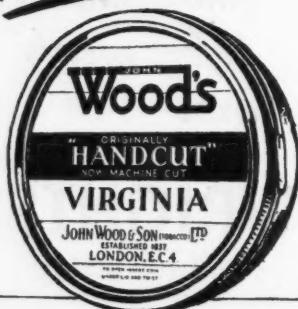
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THE PHYSICIAN'S REMEDY
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Obtainable
Everywhere



1 oz.
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All available supplies of SPARKLETS BULBS are being distributed as equitably as possible. For the present, please "go easy with the soda" and return empty Bulbs promptly to your usual supplier.



HYGIENIC—CONVENIENT—ECONOMICAL



WHAT KIND OF A SPRING IS THIS?

Telling may be careless talk, but it's safe to say that those who know SPRINGS, know STEAD. That springs from a reputation made over 40 years and knowledge born of experience. Send your Spring Problems to STEAD.

Tele: Sheffield 22283 (4 lines)

J. STEAD & CO. LTD. SHEFFIELD 2

I am the ANGLEPOISE.

or, to give me my full title, Terry's Anglepoise Lamp. I pride myself I am the most remarkable lamp made today with inclusive and patented features possessed by no other lamp.

Obedience itself, I am as flexible as your fancy. I take, and hold, any angle your need dictates, at a finger-touch, throwing my gently diffused beam on object, book or work, *not in your eyes.*

And when you do not need me, just gently push me on one side (with the same feather-light finger-touch) away, down, up, sideways, or slantwise, where you will, noiselessly, without friction, sag or droop.

For, by a cunning combination of Terry Springs I am here, there and everywhere within an ambit of four feet six inches, doing one job well—

putting the light where it's needed.

No wonder I was so popular in pre-war days. I sold more quickly than hot cakes. But now, alas, my talents and qualities are being used elsewhere and so, for the passing moment, my public know me no more. But happier days are on the way, when I can throw my helping light and take my former place in my appointed sphere.

SOME OF MY MANY ANGLES

MY COMFORT & CONVENIENCE

I am made by HERBERT TERRY & SONS, LTD., REDDITCH in the County of WORCESTER and patented in all countries.

How to clean the lavatory

TO clean the lavatory thoroughly and effectively, simply sprinkle a little Harpic into the bowl and leave as long as possible (last thing at night is a good time).


Then flush. The whole bowl gleams white!

Because it is specially made for the lavatory, Harpic does the job effectively and easily. Its thorough action removes all discoloration—cleans, disinfects and deodorizes.

Harpic is easy to use—a real boon to the housewife.

Harpic's cleansing action reaches right round the S-bend. The whole bowl is clean and sanitary—the part you don't see, as well.

HARPIC




Not too little..

not too much..

but just right

thanks to the
DOUBLE-DENSE LATHER OF
ERASMIC
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For economy

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will open your eyes!

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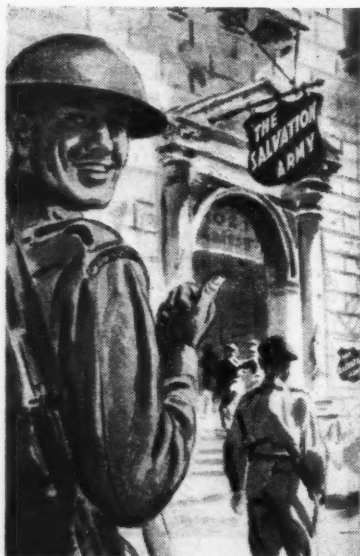
Production is restricted so don't blame your dealer if you have difficulty in obtaining Gillette blades.

Gillette is called up. No more deferments for the Blue and Thin Gillette blades. As stocks run out they must get into battledress as Gillette "Standard" Blades, but they'll still give you the finest shave you can buy.

Gillette in battledress

Gillette "Standard" and "Standard Thin" Blades (plain steel) 2d each, including Purchase Tax. Fit all Gillette razors, old or new.

WHERE THERE'S NEED —



FRONT-LINE SERVICE!

Salvation Army workers landed with the assault troops on the beaches of Sicily. Salvation Army Mobile Canteens serve in the forward areas in Italy. The Fascist Headquarters in an Italian town is now a Salvation Army Leave Club, serving 6,000 men a day.

In Italian villages, along the jungle trails of New Guinea, in Great Britain with men of the R.A.F. and United States Air Force, Salvation Army service is front-line service. When the new front line is established, The Salvation Army will be needed there, too.

**Your gift can speed our preparations.
Please send it to-day to:—**

GENERAL CARPENTER
101, QUEEN VICTORIA STREET, LONDON, E.C.4

THERE'S THE SALVATION ARMY!

THE ARMY THAT SERVES ON EVERY FRONT

SO REFRESHING!

SOMETHING TO
LOOK FORWARD
TO AFTER THE
WAR



IDRIS
QUALITY SOFT DRINKS



IDRIS LIMITED, LONDON. MAKERS OF QUALITY
TABLE WATERS THROUGH FIVE SUCCESSIVE REIGNS

**"Rest-therapy"
may be the
solution to your
INDIGESTION**

PERHAPS, in the parlance of palliatives, you have "tried everything" — everything except the oldest, simplest and most effective therapy — Rest. Give your strained digestion a course of rest and it will recover its natural powers. So, follow this simple rule. Never eat a full meal when you are tired or worried. Instead, drink a cup of Benger's Food. Benger's soothes the stomach and gives your digestion a chance to recuperate and build up its strength. Yet it provides the warmth and nourishment the body needs but in a form it can fully absorb without discomfort or digestive strain.

Why Benger's is so good for you.

Benger's is rich nourishment in a form which requires very little effort on the part of the digestive organs. It contains active enzymes which partially predigest milk so that you absorb the full value of this valuable food whilst giving your digestion the rest it needs.

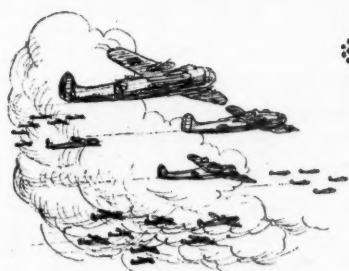
Benger's, to-day, is as easy to make as a cup of cocoa. From all Chemists and high class Grocers — The Original Plain Benger's, Malt Flavoured or Cocoa and Malt Flavoured.



BENGER'S

Household Milk
Powder and Tinned
Evaporated
Milk both make
delicious Benger's.
Try it!

Benger's Ltd., Holmes Chapel, Cheshire.



PUNCH

Or

The London Charivari



Vol. CCVI No. 5377

February 23 1944

Charivaria

GERMAN newspapers admit that another war winter would be disastrous, but at the same time they hint at possibilities of replacing it with a secret season.

Von Papen has been hurriedly recalled from a Turkish holiday resort. He had left a number of unconfirmed reports unsigned.



A German airman who escaped from a British prison camp was arrested because his truculent attitude in a shop aroused suspicion. He didn't realize that truculence in a shop nowadays is simply asking for trouble.

The newspapers state that they will be able to publish only a few of the thousands of letters received from enthusiastic nature-lovers which the censorship is holding back until March 21st.

Despite numerous assertions that public schools have had their day, we understand that many clubmen are still firmly convinced that the Atlantic Wall Game will be won on the playing fields of Eton.

A Classic Example

"Ald. M. Bloom: There you have a classic example of how by question and answer an innuendo is freely displayed in the Council Chamber, blown sky-high and brought back as a boomerang on the people who tried to set it alight."

Yorks paper.

An astrologer prefaced a recent prediction with the words "If I am not mistaken . . ." It is thought he was trying to smooth over a jealous tiff with his paper's military expert.



The Fuehrer has had the flu, and one report said he was delirious. How could anybody know?

The Sentimental Aberdonian

"4 SINGLE Pound Notes lost 27th Jan (black-out), vicinity Market St., etc.; sentimental value; reward."—*Advt. in Aberdeen paper.*

"Scoop out a potato and stuff with sausage meat," says a culinary hint. A pity nobody has thought of doing this to the sausage.

In all fairness to the Nazi propaganda story that a secret bomb is being dropped on this country, it must be quite frankly admitted that nobody has yet heard it explode.



"Tanner Finnish Premier," ran a recent *Daily Telegraph* heading. Working downwards to two a pennig?

In view of a recent statement that Mussolini would not now be recognized by his best friend, it is pertinent to note that Hitler seems to experience no difficulty.

A correspondent to a women's paper asks if it is offending the economy regulations to let her youngster sail his model yacht in the bath. It would seem permissible provided the vessel was of not more than five inches draught.

"I was touched by the number of neighbours who visited me in my London flat when I had a sharp bout of flu," says a correspondent. Apparently they all knew somebody who was looking for a flat.

Trying to Help

HOW beautifully, all grease gone, now shines again
The pattern of this awful china, so that one can see
The rim of roses round the centre, surrounding the lion
Out of an Æsop's fable, perfectly:
The end is even as the beginning
For the plate, for the saucer, for the cup;
Eating is a perpetual sinning,
Repentance is washing up.

Did you like that emotional outburst? Not very greatly?
No doubt you are right:
In America they have machines for washing-up crockery.
Oh, land of Liberty and Light!
Oh, Land!—where on earth did you pick up *this* service?
Or rather this portion of a set?
By the end of the year there will be joy in the jungle of
the pantry
When two plates of one kindred are met.

"Mr. Wedgwood, I presume!" After all it is nothing but
a convention
That a plate should have a sister or a brother:
There is splendour in infinite variety
Where none is equal to another.

If only all dinner-services were made out of paper
To whom do you suppose it would matter?
We could throw them away without trouble to the scraper
And all our pigs would be fatter.

I have found out the reason why plates get broken—
The plates one abominates, the plates one loves,
It is because the fingers get slippery:
One ought to wear rubber-tyred gloves.

Is the heart of the washer more happy than the heart of
the drier?
It is not very easy to say,
But the heart of both sings out like the thrushes in May-
time,
Let me pick up the pieces—it is only the second to-day.

Do you remember, do you remember there used to be a
sort of earthenware
That dropped on the floor of the kitchen and bounced?
Very likely when these troubles are over and the eagle
has swooped from the eyrie
And the lion has pounced

(There does not seem to be an eagle in this terrible dinner-
service
But I have found the fox and the crane)
When the nations are gathered together for the final
peace-giving
We shall have that china again.

In the absence of any kind of domestic assistance
It will be rather useful to have,
England shall make it, England shall export it,
To Turkey and Latin America, to the Swede, to the
Swiss, to the Slav.

How brightly the knives are all shining!
How noble they make one feel!
Every cloud has a silver lining
And some are of stainless steel.

I once met a Master Cutler of Sheffield, who told me
In a moment of confidence over the cruet
That stainless steel can be sharpened quite easily
If one happens to know how to do it.

Now everything is finished—is over
Except for the scouring of the pots and the cleansing
of the pans,
And that is a work which some natural instinct tells me
Is a woman's and not a man's.

The knives can go back into the dining-room
Oblivious of the grease and the jam,
The plates are all garnished and lovely—well all except
that one
(It is only the wolf and the lamb)
But to-morrow as evening closes
The same old work to do
Till we see the pattern of the roses
And the lion comes through.

EVOE.

At Lyndhurst Lodge

Mr. Colquhoun's Bicycle

AS a cyclist of some experience," began Mr. Colquhoun.
"Is this a letter to the papers?" asked John.
"I'm afraid I don't quite understand you," said
Mr. Colquhoun, with that unfailing courtesy of his.

"Letters to the papers always begin 'As a beekeeper
of some forty years' standing,'" explained John. "It's a
sort of rule."

"Not always, dear, surely?" put in Aunt Mary. "Besides,
Mr. Colquhoun did not say he was a beekeeper, did you,
Mr. Colquhoun? He said a cyclist, which is rather a
different pair of shoes even in these days of aeroplanes
without wings and girls smoking American cigars and
staying out to all hours and goodness knows what else
besides."

"My dear Aunt Mary," began John—but I wasn't
going to have that again. If Aunt Mary has a fault (a fact
which is not in dispute in this household) it is a tendency to
get hold of the wrong end of any stick handed to her and
to cling to it to the death and beyond. It is over a week
now since John explained jet propulsion to her, and a clear
ten days since he incautiously defended the right of women
to smoke in buses, but Aunt Mary is still busy getting the
issues more hopelessly confounded.

Anyway I wasn't going to have it.

"I didn't know you rode a bicycle, Mr. Colquhoun," I
said hastily. "You've been keeping it very dark."

"Alas! I have no bicycle now," he said. "It was lost,
you know, at the time." ("At the time" is Mr. Colquhoun's
euphemism for the bomb that destroyed his house, and
brought him, to our great good fortune, to Lyndhurst
Lodge.) "But I used to be keen, very keen. Oh, yes, I
have cycled from Oxford to Whitchurch in my day—with
stops, of course, naturally, with stops. I am no record-
hunter, I believe."

"Was that the Whitchurch in Hampshire, or the one in
Shropshire?"

"Or the one in Oxfordshire?"

"You're thinking of Witney, John," I said.

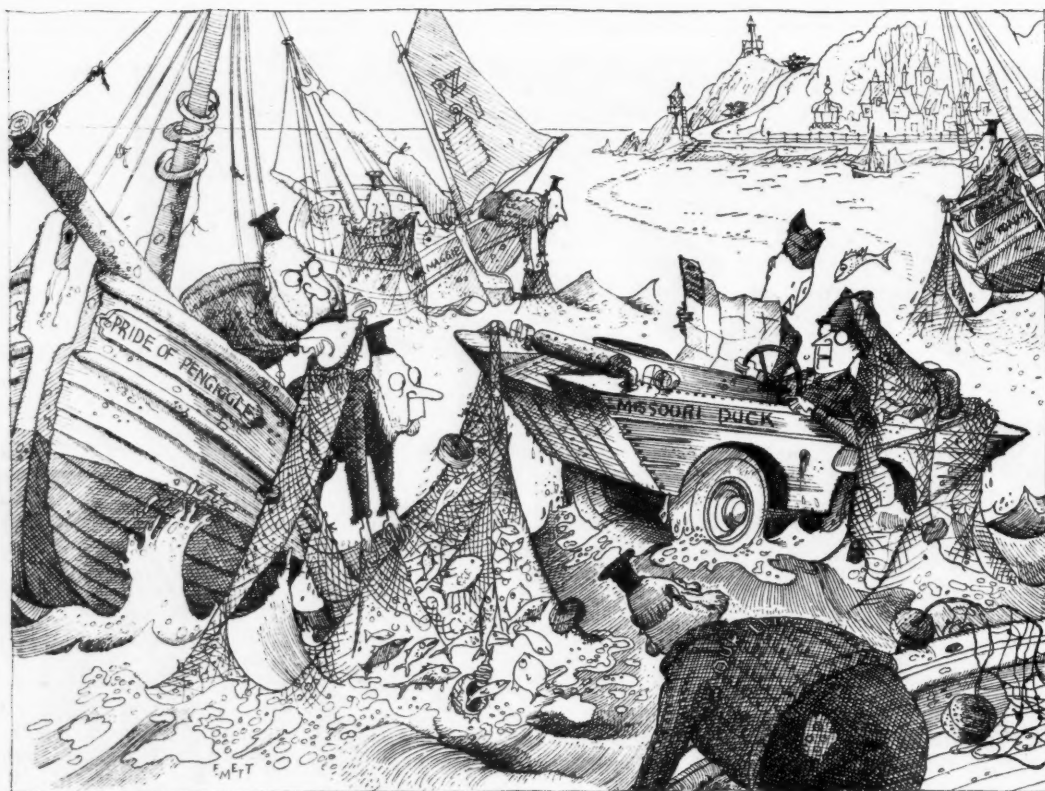
"How can you possibly tell what I'm thinking of? As
a matter of fact I don't suppose I've thought of Witney
for at least ten years. So why on earth should I suddenly
start thinking of it now?"

"There is a Whitchurch in Kent, I think," said Aunt



RED ARMY DAY

"When beggars die there are no comets seen."



"... guess we should have forked RIGHT at the traffic-lights."

Mary helpfully. "Or is it Whittlesea? Perhaps Mr. Colquhoun left his bicycle there. If I could write to Evelyn—she is a niece of mine, Mr. Colquhoun, very gifted, she speaks French like a nigger, I'm told——"

"Native, Aunt."

"—and lives at Tunbridge Wells. Don't interrupt, dear, please. I'm sure she would be very glad to do anything she could."

"It is most kind of you to think of it," said Mr. Colquhoun. "Most kind. But I fear nothing can be done now. If I might venture to clear up a slight misunderstanding——"

"Slight' is good," said John.

"Blankets!" cried Aunt Mary suddenly, clasping her hands in a kind of ecstasy. "In the tool-shed, of course! I knew it would come to me if I just put the whole thing right out of my mind. Forgive me, Mr. Colquhoun, but your speaking of Witney just now reminded me."

"My dear lady, I confess I am not absolutely clear——"

"Personally I am completely bewildered," I said. "What on earth have blankets in the tool-shed got to do with Mr. Colquhoun's bicycle?"

"Come to that, what are blankets doing in the tool-shed, anyway?" said John. "Are we going in for mustard-and-ress in a big way?"

"How absurd you are!" said Aunt Mary. "The blankets are in the cupboard under the stairs, where I always put them. It is the thing for sewing them together that is in the tool-shed. At least I am almost certain I put it there

on Friday when we had the W.V.S. meeting in the morning, if you remember."

"Wasn't it a bit crowded in the tool-shed, Aunt Mary?"

"Don't be an ass, John," I said. "What Aunt Mary means is that because there was a W.V.S. meeting in the morning at which they were going to sew blankets together, she had the thing for sewing them together with her when she went to the tool-shed for a rake or something, after breakfast, and inadvertently left it there when she came out. Any idiot can see that."

"I mean nothing of the kind," said Aunt Mary. "You all deliberately muddle up everything I say. But Mr. Colquhoun understands."

Mr. Colquhoun, like a wise man, stroked his knees and said nothing.

"Well, where are we now?" said John. "I'm beginning to lose the thread of this conversation."

"Too much cigar-smoking, that's what's the matter with you," said Aunt Mary triumphantly, and she swept out as she always does after scoring a decided point.

"You were going to tell us about your bicycle-ride to Whitechurch, Mr. Colquhoun," I said.

"Ah, dear me, yes," said Mr. Colquhoun. "That was a long time ago. More years than I care to remember. Still——"

"Lunch," said Brenda, popping a flushed face round the door. "Where's everybody?"

"She's in the tool-shed," said John.

H. F. E.

A Question of Discipline

"YOU garter be severe with some men," said the Lieutenant from Utah, pushing back his mackintosh-topped hat and taking a pull at his straight orange squash. "You simply garter."

I nodded. "They garter be learned a lesson, some men," he said. "Now I have a little bunch of Indian boys in my little mob. They get into plenty of trouble. Specially Whitebird and Warbonnet and Yellowcloud. I had trouble with Yellowcloud Tuesday."

"Indians?" I said. "Not Red Indians?"

"Sure, sure. Red Indians. North American Indians. Got North American Indian names, too. Well, partly, anyhow."

"How do you mean, 'partly'?"

"Well, now; take this guy who made trouble Tuesday. Name of Yellowcloud. But Yellowcloud, now, he's gotten himself good, wholesome, honest-to-goodness Christian names, like as if his skin was as white as yours or mine, so his nominal roll entry reads 'Private Taylor Z. Yellowcloud.' Get it?"

"Sure, I get it—I mean, yes, I see what you mean. What does the 'Z' stand for?"

"How's that?"

"The 'Z.' What does it stand for?"

"Oh, I get it—the 'Zee.' Oh, cheese, I wouldn't know about that. Lots of white soldiers you never find out what their middle name-initial signifies. Anyhow, this Taylor Z. Yellowcloud he gets himself in a packet of trouble Tuesday on account of these North American Indians kinder have wild patches sometimes, being mighty allergic to discipline. Taylor Z. Yellowcloud specially. Now Tuesday morning this bird gets one of these patches, and d'you know what?—he breaks out of camp. Yes, sir—right out of camp, straight after breakfast, never starts work at all."

"Oh, well," I said, "I know of cases in my own unit—"

"But that's not all. This guy has to break out in the colonel's sedan. Just gets in and drives right off."

"Ah, I see."

"And because he doesn't want no trouble with the sentry he has to forge a trip-chit—an authorization for transportation, see? Forges a trip-chit, signed with the colonel's name."

"Pretty serious, what?"

"Aw, I'm not going to say serious," said the Lieutenant from Utah—"not

what the U.S. Army would call serious. Not good—but not real bad. But that's not all, neither. Taylor Z. Yellowcloud believes in doing the thing right. He drives right across country into town, and he goes right into the nearest saloon, and he sets himself up a line of highballs. And does he drink those highballs!"

"Does he?"

"Mister, he certainly does. And when it gets around to closing time Taylor Z. invites the yell-headed dame behind the counter to go a-buggy-ridin' with him for the afternoon . . ."

"In the colonel's car?"

"Sure, sure—in the colonel's sedan. And she says yes. And off they go. Now, this Yellowcloud—same as his buddies, Warbonnet and Whitebird—he ain't much of a head for hard liquor—specially a long line of highballs. So presently, when the rye gets around to his bean, he comes along driving the colonel's sedan flat out along Main Street with a coupla wheels on the sidewalk. And the yell-headed dame from the saloon screaming and hollering fit to bust her head wide open. And in no time at all they run over a military policeman."

"You mean they come across a military policeman?"

"I mean they run one over. Yes, sir—they run clean over an M.P."

"Killed him?"

"Hell, no—nobody can't kill M.P.s. They go on for ever. But what with having two wheels on the sidewalk, and the sidewalk being good and high, the M.P. lays him down smartly in the gutter and the colonel's sedan runs right over him."

"Hurt him at all?" I asked.

"Not a hair of him. But it was bad all the same. Yellowcloud oughta have stopped, on account of the M.P. was waving him to pull over just prior to he was run down. But aside from that, the M.P. caught up with the pair of them after a spell, on account of Yellowcloud drives the sedan slap through a drug-store window. Yellowcloud goes face-first into an easy chair in the parlour, back of the store; the yell-headed dame takes a toss down a hole in the sidewalk, carrying a corporation workman's canvas lean-to along with her to break the fall. And

the both of them ain't so much as scratched."

"The devil looks after his own."

"How's that again?"

"It's a saying we have—'The devil looks after his own.'"

The Lieutenant from Utah wagged his head gravely. "You can say that again. Anybody but a military policeman woulda been broke up like a breakfast food."

"Actually I was referring to—"

"So there's the set-up for you. I guess the colonel was pretty severe with Taylor Z. Yellowcloud. Generally we let the redskins off light, on account of perhaps they don't get the war situation quite straight in their minds. But there was a heap of charges against Taylor Z. Breaking outer camp, now—"

"Stealing the car—"

"Sure, snitching the colonel's sedan—that was bad."

"Forging the—er—transportation authorization—"

"Yeh, the trip-chit, sure. Then being absent from work, getting stinko—"

"Dangerous driving, I suppose."

"Sure, sure. Taking up with the blonde, drunk in charge of an automobile, negligently damaging U.S. Army property—"

"Then there was the chemist's shop."

"Chemist's . . . ? Oh, I get it. Sure, smashing up the drug-store. Yes, sir, a pile of charges against Taylor Z. Yellowcloud. I guess the colonel was dead right, giving that crazy redskin seven days confined to barracks."

"Seven days . . . !"

"I know, pal, but you garter do it. They garter be learned a lesson, these boys. It wouldn't a been so bad, maybe, only that Taylor Z. was quarantined for scarlet fever at the time—"

"He was what?"

"Quarantined. That means he didn't oughta have bust out just then, not however bad he wanted."

"Thank you. But—seven days, for that—!"

"Listen, pal. Ain't that just what I'm trying to say. They garter be learned a lesson. Maybe Taylor Z. has learned his lesson. Maybe he'll wait until he's outer quarantine before he busts outer camp again. You garter be severe with some men," said the Lieutenant from Utah, pulling down his mackintosh-topped hat.

The fact that goods made of raw materials in short supply owing to war conditions are advertised in this paper should not be taken as an indication that they are necessarily available for export.

H. J.'s Dramatic Fragments

SCENES of mirth and levity are what the following fragment was written amidst. I had been asked to act like Father Christmas at a party for Old Age Pensioners and did not quite know what to do, since the only activity suggested by this character is distributing presents, and these I had been ordered to try to retain until after tea. Another trouble was that the guests treated me with a patronizing condescension as my beard was much the shortest there, so I just stood about moodily, doing a little trick I had bought from a hawker; it was a bell you held inside your mouth and when you shook your head it tinkled. I thus had an opportunity for composition, and here is what I composed.

GRANNY HOODOO SAVES THE RANCH.

(The scene is the office of the editor of "The Morning After.")

Enter the proprietor, LORD LUDGATE

LUDGATE. There was a comma missing on page two this morning. I have ceased admiring the Minister of Health. Book of the Week: Gibbon's *Fall and Decline of the Roman Empire*. It's time there was a centenarian in Cheshire.

EDITOR. Are we for or against Smoke Abatement?

LUDGATE. More smoke but brighter colours: help tourist trade. Time we had a libel action. Get that man we had last year; he's fun in the box and quite cheap.

EDITOR. This new humorist you chose, don't you think perhaps he is not quite what our readers expect?

LUDGATE. Nonsense! The man's a genius. Double his space.

EDITOR. For the last five issues he has been translating *Bradshaw* into mediæval Latin.

LUDGATE. Darn clever. I like a humorist who gives a paper tone. [Exit. EDITOR switches on dictaphone]

EDITOR. To all departments: Use of the word "howsoever" will cease from Monday next. The following will be explained in brackets when used: hors d'œuvres, sine qua non, tit for tat. Begin advance publicity for following features: "He Was Her Man: a pictorial life of Clytemnestra," "Poultry as Pets," by A Correspondent, and "The Future of Lord Ludgate," by a Peeress.

Enter OLD FATHER CAPRICORN, the Astrological Editor

OLD FATHER CAPRICORN. Any orders?

EDITOR. The Chief's birthday is on Thursday. Do be careful this time. [Exit OLD FATHER CAPRICORN]

Enter LORD LUDGATE

LUDGATE. What provision do you make for left-handed readers? None at all. In future have a special issue opening the other way, available at same price on presentation of doctor's certificate. Start campaign: Press to get own M.P.s like universities. Readers elect. Circulation basis. Save staff pensions. Swaffer for Speaker. Get busy.

[Exit. EDITOR telephones]

EDITOR. Give me the News Room. The following are due for next week: Floods with cows swimming in them; Secret drinking in isolation hospital disclosed by shocked patient; Tribe of hat-wearing gorillas discovered in Congo.

Enter FIFI SPOON, the Leaderette

FIFI. Can you spare a moment for little me? This Free

Trade I am writing about—does it mean giving away things like cutlery and dictionaries? I am afraid I am most awfully ignorant.

EDITOR. Not at all, my dear. Your uncle was in just now. Don't bother your pretty head; just remember our readers don't want Free Trade. They are not going to have it forced upon them. The Voice of the People Shall Prevail.

FIFI. Oo, thanks ever so.

[Exit]

Enter SANDY, Fleet Street's most experienced reporter

SANDY. Mon, but I'm dry. A wee column on the prospects for the Derby, anither on Covent Garden . . . twelve operas and social notes, and the Beekeepers' Log, all in the last half hour.

EDITOR. Just let me reckon up the lines and I'll pay you. (Pause.) All these proper names count half-rates.

SANDY. Forbye! I had to spell yon richt.

EDITOR. Five pounds four and eleven. Don't spend it all on drink. Now, there is a missing Rotarian at Sheffield, and here are six volumes of the Encyclopædia of Ballistics for review. You can do the reading in the train.

SANDY. Don't I get luggage in advance for them?

EDITOR. You do not. They go on the rack.

SANDY. Hoots, but you're hard.

[Exit]

Enter LORD LUDGATE

LUDGATE. In future all headlines to be at the bottom instead of the top. No more reading a paper without buying it. Get your hair cut and smile more. What's your name?

FINIS

Lyne

SEE where the stones are worn beside the street

By leisured, prosperous, long-departed feet,
And swept again—already smooth and neat—
As swaying shadows of the lilac fall
Over the crumbled, secret garden wall.

Behind that knocker and that kind green door
Aunt Jennie lived in eighteen-thirty-four.
By then her father, Thomas White, was dead.
"He loved the very stones of Lyne," she said.
And now each ledge and cornice seems to rise
Washed by the love of long-acquainted eyes.

Where the church towers to the equal sky,
By the paved path Aunt Jennie's forbears lie
Beneath their dignity of tabled stone,
Still by the passers-by revered and known;
And grass grows greenly, as it surely must
From sober, righteous and godly dust.

Friend, like an Orpheus of our latter days
On this dear seemliness you must not gaze
Too long or longingly. I warn you, no!
Quick, take the mass-made motor-bus, and go.

F. C. C.

Abdulla

I HAVE a new batman. His name is Abdulla Wegusa, and he is only four feet six inches high. My late batman was six feet six inches tall, and the noise his woolly hair made scraping along the roof of the tent when he brought my morning tea used to make me shudder, so when he was to leave I said "Fabiano, before you go, kindly arrange to get me a short batman—a very short batman."

So he brought me Abdulla, whose shortness is absolutely his only qualification for the job. He cannot speak Swahili, which is the only African language I even partially know. He cannot press clothes, or if he presses them he always leaves packets of cigarettes in the pockets and they are the only things that get pressed, coming out flat like the Turkish cigarettes you used to buy in England.

At 0600 hours he wakes me with a cup of cold tea. Zeal and not laziness is the cause of the cold tea. He gets up at 0400 hours to make it rather than risk being late. The first morning I did not drink it, but waited until he had gone and then poured it away into the sand. Unfortunately he saw the tea-leaves on the sand and put two and two together. He was very upset.

"I will get you another batman," he said simply; "I am no good."

So of course I had to say that he was excellent, and that I had really drunk the tea and thrown away only the dregs. After that he used to wait by my bed and watch me drink it each morning.

The language difficulty between Abdulla and myself leads to some awkward moments. The other day I wanted a glass of cold water to drink in the middle of the morning, and he brought me a bucket of hot water to wash in. So I took off my collar and tie and washed, and as I was doing so the Major arrived from H.Q. and looked at me severely.

"This is rather late to be getting up," he said.

So I tried to dress hurriedly, but found that Abdulla had taken away my collar and tie to wash and iron them. As all my other collars and ties were already hanging on the line, I had to go round the camp with the Major without a collar or tie. The next day I got a letter saying that while he appreciated that we were at war, officers should still observe dress regulations whenever possible.

Abdulla cannot read or write, and one bit of paper or book is to him much



Fargass

"Let's go round to Akropopolos' Scandinavian Posada and see if the maitre d'hôtel can give us a colazione of real old English Chop Suey."

like another. He lines the drawers of my filing-cabinet with Secret and Confidential Middle East Orders, and all I can ever find in the Secret file is bits of old copies of *Punch* and programmes of Shafto's Cinemas for 1941.

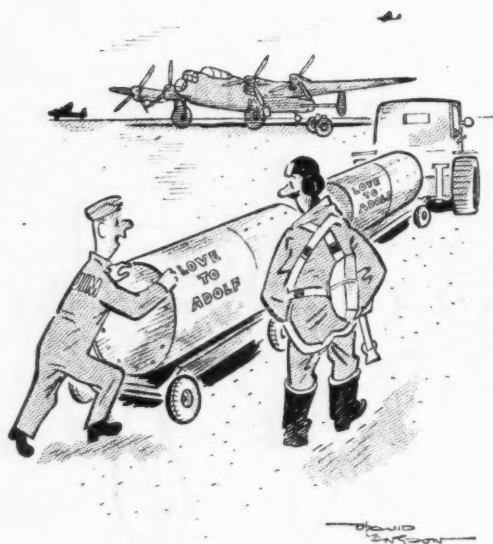
With all this to his discredit he still thinks he is the perfect batman, and his pleased smile when I give him his weekly bonus of five piastres makes up for a lot of small inconveniences. Even so, I still hastily evade his inquiries about the climate of London, and

whether I am likely to have need of an intelligent servant after the war. The Grand New World they are so busy planning is going to be quite difficult enough to live in, I feel sure, without having Abdulla haunting my London flat.

A Very Fluid Front

"Moreover, Nikopol is 500 miles west of Stalingrad—500 miles nearer the Reich than just a year ago."

Dundee Courier and Advertiser.



"Yes, sir, 'Love to Adolf' again. Corporal says it's a waste of time thinking up new 'uns, because they probably don't read 'em anyway."

Vinegar's Wake

RAB Rib and Tam MacMegaphone,
Those wells of Scottish undefiled,
To doubtful Sassenachs best known
As Caledonia's Sterne and Wilde—

These wits, when with eupeptic glee
They praise soused cod and sourseder mullet,
Leave no one less amused than me.
No sour sea-food goes down my gullet.

Nor Gaelic wit nor Highland fling
Nor Attie salt my taste can tickle
For such an uninspiring thing
As strips of fish rolled up in pickle.

We read in Denizen's *The Deep*
(Alfred, Lord Denizen's, I mean)
The words "Cry haddock! and let sleep
The dogfish" on page seventeen;

And though I deprecate the puns
(If such they be) I would not wish
To dodge admitting that for once
I quite agree about the fish.

To-day, when zoning schemes deny
So much to all, opinion differs
("O Zone!" is now the tradesman's cry
As well as that of seaside sniffers);

Now window-dressing's the despair
Of fish-man just as much as grocer:
Untenanted his slabs and bare,
Withered his show (oh, withered show, sir). . . .

But though the trouble's gone so far,
I'll not abate one jit or tottle
My view that though fish-strips may jar
Most certainly they will not bottle. R. M.

Genius

MY readers, who, no less than ordinary people, sometimes find themselves victims of the association of ideas, are no doubt waiting for me to define genius as an infinite capacity for taking pains. Well, all right, if it means that now they can settle down and concentrate. But what I really want to tell them about is not, strictly speaking, always genius, and I shall probably not use the word again. I only want to draw a snow-line round a certain level of human temperament and describe the kind of people you will find above it. Another word for these people is artists, but my readers will have to remember that the word *artist*, artistically speaking, includes writers and musicians and indeed all those people who are different from those other people whom they, the artists, consider themselves different from. In what way exactly is an artist different from another person? Well, artists would explain that they are different because *they are different*, while other people would explain that artists are different because they are a nuisance. I think this proves what I am trying to establish; there *is* a difference, if only in attitude. And, now that my readers have had time to sort themselves out into the category they must long ago have sorted themselves into, I can get on with the job.

Artists, as I have hinted, can be divided rather roughly into three main groups: painters, composers and writers. It will be seen that I am talking here of *creative* artists, that is, people who either create paintings, music or bits of writing, or would be creating them like mad if they were only given the chance; so that it will also be seen that I am talking of other kinds of artists too. Each group of artists has different methods of work, and least is known about the methods of composers, because the public has to deduce what it can from the films. According to the films, composers sit a long way back from the piano and play with the left hand only, using the right hand to write it all down, or rather up, the paper being propped on the music-rest, and, if the public knows anything about music-rests, constantly bending over or slipping off. The whole thing seems so difficult that the public is more than willing to concede that composing is a technical process—something which people either can do or cannot. There is thus, between composers and the public, little or no friction. Each side knows its place. Composers, the public imagines, have long ago roped in their own households as accessories, and probably make up for everything by being able to play the piano, instead of, as in ordinary households, just playing it. If the public goes on thinking about composers it does not go much further than conjuring up long hair and bow ties. The whole position, in fact, is pretty satisfactory.

But with painters we find that the general public is not quite so much at ease. One of the troubles is that painting has established itself so firmly as a technical process that



"I've just ordered another five hundredweight; that will make three tons we've saved this winter!"

non-painters cannot really think of it as anything more. They class it with carpet-laying, or something to watch, but they allow dimly that unlike carpet-laying it must be difficult even if you know how, and this leads them, while watching a painter, to point out where a picture is going wrong; and the fact that painters do not seem to mind all that much they find really baffling. The nub of the problem is of course that painters have to get fairly close up to the outside world before they can paint it, so that they are not allowed to be so readily inaccessible as the public thinks that painters think the public ought to allow them to be. To make up for this the public has always made it clear that painters can surround themselves with all the temperament or (as they think of it) mess which painters think fit. Painters, in their turn, know by instinct that the worse mess or (as they think the public thinks of it) temperament they can surround themselves with the better. Thus it is that painters, more than any other kind of artist, are traditionally obliged to eat expensive meals from paper bags, buy carpets to hang on their walls and generally confuse luxury with necessity. One day the whole question may be cleared up, but not, as things are, by either painters or their public.

With writers we are psychologically in another boat. The trouble here is that writing is not, to the public, a technical process at all. The fact that nearly everyone can write, which after all only means putting words down on paper, has led to some muddle in the public's mind. Very subconsciously indeed the public thinks of writing as something done first at school and then in offices; in fact, as a process denoting efficiency. Writers are alive to this, and their first step in self-defence has been to establish that *they cannot write*. I mean, not in the most elementary sense. They cannot write a word down so that anyone else can read it. Their handwriting, they say, looks like the wanderings of a drunken spider. They cannot, they add to clinch it, put one word together, let alone two or three, so that they find it impossible to write anything as difficult as a letter. To prove this they do not write letters. A good many writers nowadays have gone so far as to admit that they cannot write a single

word even illegibly, but can only put their thoughts down by typing them; but this, they hasten to add, does not make letter-writing any easier. Having got all this clear, they wind up by saying that they would rather do anything in the world than write, and can only do it when they are in a filthy temper anyway. Here another motive becomes visible; they are trying to get a room to themselves, if it is only the dining-room between two meals. The result of all this is that the public as a whole is more frightened of writers than of any other kind of artist. It sees them as tortured beings. It is only too glad to give them a room to themselves, if overinclined to think that shouting at them through the door is not breaking the rules. To sum it up, the relation between writers and their public is tenuous and has, as in no other branch of the arts, to be chronically fostered.

I have not left myself space to say much about the general characteristics of the artist, by which I mean first funny clothes and next absence of mind, but it is all quite simple as psychologists see it. Artists, say psychologists, wear funny clothes because they know that order comes from chaos, and they hope, by expressing their chaos in their clothes, that they will feel a bit more inclined to sort themselves out into order, in other words get some work done. This, psychologists—and artists, if the public is rash enough to ask them—are very keen on establishing as the whole attitude of artists to life, because it lets them out of everything. It is the basis of their absent-mindedness, because when we are absent-minded it is because we are thinking not about what we are doing but what we are not doing; and artists are nearly always absent-minded because they are nearly always thinking about their work and nearly always not doing it.

o o

"In the Clydeside shipbuilding and engineering industry, over one whole year, only two days out of about a thousand were lost in disputes."—*Glasgow paper*.

That was a whole year, all right.



Hollowood

"Next, take the orange and place it to the ear. If you hear a regular ticking sound . . ."



"Yes, Horace has gone to the mines. Of course he'll have to start at the top and work his way down."

The Land Girl

A GENTIL girl ther was with us al-so
That from hir wonyng hadde longe
y-go
To swinken on a ferme, soth to seyn;
Thogh it were thonder, wind, or snow, or
reyn
She lette nat to delven and laboure
About the wide feeldes, hour by houre,
Up-on hir feet, and in her hande a rake;
Ther nas on lond no wyrt, I undertake,
But she of it ne coude wel the lore;
She hadde sowe, and after leyd in store
Oynons and garleek, pese and rye and corn;
Ful ofte hadde she the shep y-shorn,

And fond of mylking kyn the nexte weye,
For she was oftetye a maner deye.
Of leeks and eke of marwes coude she;
Seynt Middeltoun she was in hir countree.
I seigh hir tendre legges steite y-clad
In grieves brune, as she had ben a lad;
Hir hosen were of hew lyk yalwe golde
That at hir knee were shapen in a folde;
Of fustian was hir overest courtepy,
And gauded al with boutons, fetisly;
Hir nekke-chef as yonge grass was grene;
Of mortal yeres had she seen eightene;
Hir hat was brood, as she were right a scout.
Ever she rood the midmost of our route.



THE RELUCTANT ALLY

"Don't you dare to desert me in my hour of trouble!"

Impressions of Parliament

Business Done

Tuesday, February 15th.—House of Lords: More Judges Are Promised.
House of Commons: Mixed Grill.

Wednesday, February 16th.—House of Lords: War and Peace.

House of Commons: Further Education.

Thursday, February 17th.—House of Commons: A National Health Service.

Tuesday, February 15th.—Witty Mr. JIMMY MAXTON recently offered hearty congratulations to the Government Chief Whip, Mr. JAMES STUART, on what he described as an "excellent jumble sale." He was referring to the somewhat mixed programme of business "The Chief" had planned.

To-day Members themselves (without of course that perfect co-operation that comes from the Government Whips' Room) had arranged a thoroughly mixed lot of questions.

The Question-paper looked like a general knowledge quiz. Members bobbed up with the most startlingly varied queries; Ministers bobbed up with answers at least as varied.

For example: Sir JAMES GRIGG, the imperturbable War Minister, was asked to use his requisitioning powers to take over theatres and cinemas in which to provide Sunday entertainments for the troops.

"I sympathize," Sir JAMES said, "but such action would not be appropriate."

Mr. PEAKE, Parliamentary Secretary to the Home Office, was asked whether, to save petrol, time, wrongful use of agricultural land and the morals of those who were to attend, he would prevent a three-days' coursing meeting due to be held soon.

"It would not be justifiable," said Mr. PEAKE, "to use war-time powers to deal with the controversial question of blood sports."

He added (with recollections that the sport of his questioner, Mr. LEACH, is chess) that he would not feel justified either in preventing a chess congress up Blackpool way merely because someone might go there in a taxi, thus wasting petrol.

Then Captain ALAN GRAHAM wanted the Treasury grants to C.E.M.A. cut down because shows of pictures sponsored by that body had had a "debasement effect."

Mr. CHUTER EDE, Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education, would not accept "this sweeping criticism" of the exhibitions, and the

House cheered Mrs. THELMA CAZALET-KEIR's counter-description of the shows as providing "pleasure and uplift." Quizzed by Sir HERBERT WILLIAMS, South Croydon's alert Conservative, about the meaning of "CEMA"—did it, asked the knight, mean "Church of England Musical Association?" Mr. EDE explained patiently that it meant "Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts"—adding, oh! so gently, that it might be very useful in Croydon.

Having delivered this quip Mr. EDE led the 'earty larter—considerably to the puzzlement of a number of Eighth Army officers and O.R.s in the Gallery, who were clearly unable to follow Parliament's highly specialized brand of humour.



"AN ECONOMIC THERMOSTAT"

THE MINISTER OF RECONSTRUCTION

When Mr. RALPH ASSHETON, Financial Secretary to the Treasury, casually mentioned that the total Budget deficit since the war began was £10,900,000,000 nobody turned a hair. It was Mr. ARTHUR GREENWOOD who remarked, on a famous occasion, that "pounds, shillings and pence are meaningless symbols." They certainly did not seem to mean much to the House.

Mr. HUGH DALTON, President of the Board of Trade, got much nearer home with a couple of announcements. No, said he, he would not make austerity socks (those mitten-like things, which end where they ought to begin) coupon free. "Nobody will buy them if I want coupons, eh?" he cried, with a sardonic Wicked Uncle-ish laugh—"but a million pairs are sold each month!"

He was equally tough about non-austerity suits, promised with a flourish

a week or two ago. There would be few of them for some months, he told the crestfallen males, while the lady Members looked quietly gratified.

As the grand feature of the jumble sale, Mr. Speaker himself announced a conference on electoral reform, the redistribution of seats and similar matters. Lord MARGESSON, for so long a power in the Commons, headed a list of thirty-two peers and M.P.s who will form a Speaker's Conference to reconstruct the human side of the House of Commons, just as efficiently as Lord WINTERTON's Select Committee is planning to reconstruct the bomb-shattered buildings.

Mr. Speaker got what was easily the best cheer of the day.

Over in the Lords, Lord SIMON successfully asked for the Second Reading of a Bill to create three more High Court judges, partly to speed up divorce actions by hearing them on circuit.

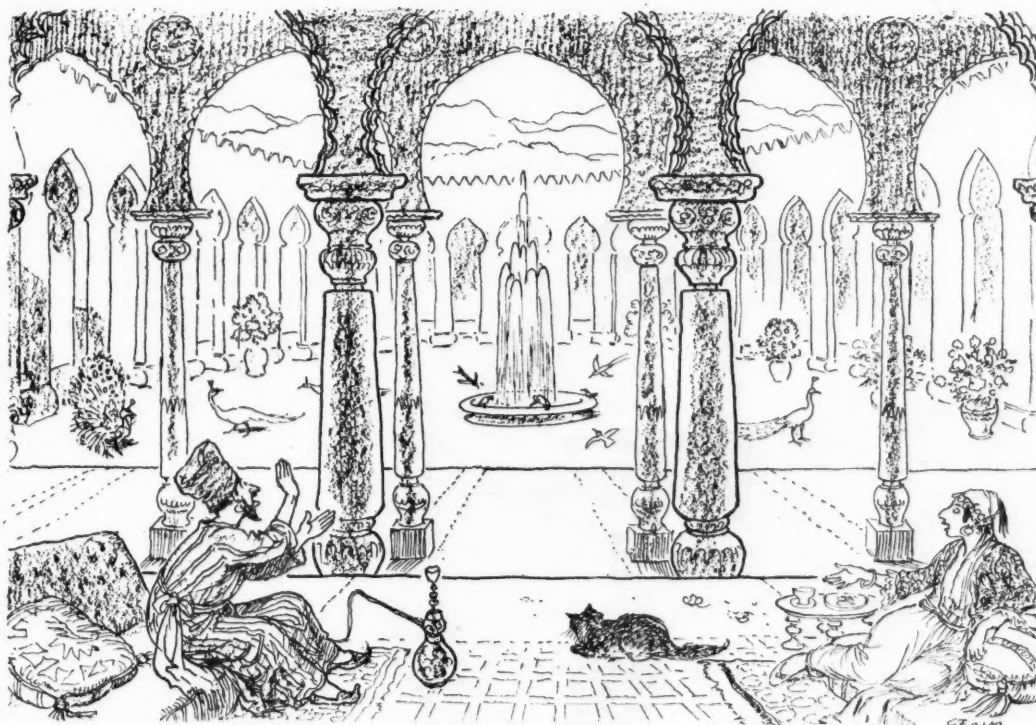
Having heard the Bill commended by the Lord Chancellor with his normal crystal clarity, their lordships were startled to hear the Lord Chief Justice, Lord CALDECOTE, suggest that the Government ought to create "more judge-power" to overcome arrears of litigation. The House was crowded with Law Lords, who winced a little at this expressive, if not quite orthodox, phrase.

Then, to round off a kaleidoscopic day, Lord WOOLTON, Minister of Reconstruction, talked about getting ten million people into new jobs, the continuation of rationing after the war, and the control of "a boom" which might then come.

Looking forward to the return of peace, he proclaimed that the Government had an "economic thermostat" which would, it seemed, enable the State so to control the cooking of our national pie as to ensure that it was as palatable as world conditions permitted. This return of the ex-Food Minister to his old love the domestic gas-stove was noted by a House that was clearly a little puzzled by his imagery.

Wednesday, February 16th.—Archbishop Lord LANG found himself the centre of heated debate in the House of Lords when he raised the question of the preservation of historic buildings and monuments in the war zones. Clearly feeling deeply, he urged that we should do all we could to prevent the destruction of historic places, for they are the property of the whole world, all time.

He gave unstinted praise to the patience and forbearance of the Allied troops who, for weary perilous days,



"It's not the slightest use you sitting there clapping your hands; our last slave was called up yesterday."

had tried by stratagem to overcome the use by the Germans as an artillery post of the Benedictine Monastery at Cassino in Italy. Not until it became plain that many precious lives were to be lost by further delay was the order given—only the day before—for the bombing and shelling of the building, and its speedy destruction.

What, it was asked, was a dead stone or a dead picture beside the life of one man? But, said Lord LANG, these stones, these pictures, were not dead. They lived to teach and inspire each succeeding generation, and he earnestly pleaded that everything possible should be done to preserve them, even in the midst of world war. They were, after all, part of the civilization for which we were fighting.

Lord LATHAM, with what most of his fellow-peers regarded as somewhat unnecessary heat, complained that the Archbishop had raised the matter at an unfortunate time, and said that people would not submit to soldiers' lives being sacrificed to save any building in the world.

But Lord SAMUEL, from the Liberal

Benches, added his plea that all possible should be done to save historic monuments and buildings from the horrors of war, that even in the midst of wholesale destruction and fury some thought should be had for the peaceful morrow—and all our needful days.

Lord SIMON, the Lord Chancellor, intervening with that judicial calm that so well becomes him, promised that there was no question of saving a building, however venerable, if that meant the loss of lives. But every practicable step was being taken, and would always be taken, to prevent needless destruction.

The acts of the enemy, said Lord SIMON, provided no reason why we should emulate them, and we should not do so. Only when the hard facts of war presented the naked choice: an historic building or a human life, would we choose the destruction of the building.

Mr. CHURCHILL gave the Commons a sharp reminder that the war is both grim and earnest by telling them the British Army casualty figures from the

first landing in Italy until this week: 7,635 killed, 23,283 wounded, 5,708 missing. Royal Navy and R.A.F. figures are to be added to this total.

The House listened to two masterpieces of self-expression—one by Colonel GREENWELL, who, learning that there was one Commodore, R.N.V.R., in the entire Navy, remarked that it was "such a very small number," and the other by Mr. QUINTIN HOGG, who angrily told the Government that the "zoning" of Oxford's laundries "raised a great constitutional issue."

Thursday, February 17th.—Stern mention was made of the alleged action of the military authorities in Italy in imposing strict censorship on war correspondents there in the matter of their views on the course of events. Sir JAMES GRIGG, the War Minister, promised to make the fullest inquiries and communicate the results to the House.

Mr. HENRY WILLINK, the Minister of Health, announced a White Paper on a national health service, designed to keep the nation healthy rather than cure its ills. The House liked the idea.



"As for their invasion threats, I my fingers snap—thus!"

Little Talks

I AGREE, old boy, but—

We must have more youth in politics.

Why?

Well, of course. Who could be better fitted to direct the destinies of the New World than the brave boys who fought the Battle of Britain or saved England on the beaches of Dunkirk?

You got that out of a leading article. I remember it.

Well, it's no worse for that.

I agree. But does it make any particular sense? I need not say that I have the greatest admiration for the said brave boys. But would you say

that after the war we ought to look for a new Lord Chancellor or a new Lord Chief Justice among their ranks?

Well, no.

Do you think that Lord Horder should be asked to make way for a medical student?

No.

Should all the books be written by youth?

Certainly not.

Is a man too old to conduct an orchestra at fifty?

No.

Should the Stipendiary Magistrates be men who have fought in the war?

No.

I see. It is only in politics that youth, as such, is essential? Should all the Members of Parliament be under thirty?

No, I didn't say that. I merely said it was a bad thing for them all to be elderly men.

What are the particular qualities which endear a politician to you?

Courage, sincerity, a fresh outlook.

Has nobody over thirty got these?

Old men get stuck in a groove. They tend to play for safety. No new ideas.

People like Lloyd George, Winston Churchill, Roosevelt, Gladstone?

There are exceptions, of course.

By the way, haven't you forgotten one or two qualities?

Such as—?

Well, knowledge, wisdom, experience.

They will come.

Before thirty?

Very often, yes.

I agree. But do they go away after thirty?

Don't be an ass. The point is that the boys who have had to fight this war should have some say, and a big one, in making the peace.

Of course.

But how can they? Your generation is standing in the way. And a nice mess your generation has made of things.

"My generation"? What d'you mean?

Well, you made this mouldy war, didn't you—not the boys in the aeroplanes and the trenches?

Here, half a minute, old chap. My generation were the brave boys who fought the last war—and, believe me, there were trenches, and even aeroplanes, even then. In those days, we were youth. Everybody said that we ought to have a big say in making the peace. And so we did. They gave us all votes at once. And now you say we made a muck of things and caused another war.

So you did.

Maybe, old boy. But we were youth. We were the boys with courage, sincerity and a fresh outlook.

The youth of to-day are different.

I hope so, I'm sure. But in twenty-five years they'll be the older generation; and people like you will be saying what a mess they made of everything. By the way, with your views, I suppose you supported the young soldier at the Skipton by-election?

Yes, I went and spoke for him. We kept the old men out.

And I assume that you supported the young soldier at the West Derby election?

No. I went and spoke against him.

They That Go Down to the Sea in Ships

"AS you may well imagine, this is about the worst time of the year to be at sea, and so at this time such articles as you send are a genuine comfort to me."

Now more than ever before are we dependent for our livelihood upon the courage and steadfastness of our gallant crews "that go down to the sea in ships." You, by your generous gifts to the PUNCH COMFORTS FUND, can help to alleviate their sufferings, and to make their task less arduous. We rely on you because we know that, like them, you will not let us down. All donations will be gratefully received and acknowledged by Mr. Punch at PUNCH COMFORTS FUND, 10 Bouverie St., London, E.C.4.

How you do get about! So you supported the other fellow. How old was he?

About sixty.

But this is very queer. You supported this old man in a groove, a player-for-safety, and, for all I know, festooned with vested interests—

But—

When you had against him a fine young soldier with a fresh outlook who had fought in France?

I never said that you must have Youth in all circumstances. Young Lord Hartington has no political knowledge or experience.

Oh? But I thought they came?

Anyhow, he's a Tory.

I see. So what you really mean is that you support Youth as long as it votes Left?

I never said any such thing.

But why not? It's a perfectly sound and sensible thing to say. It merely means that, young or old, you choose your candidate according to his character and opinions?

Of course.

Yes, but that isn't what you said to start with. You said "We must have more Youth in Parliament." And I'm awfully sorry, old boy—a thousand apologies—but I thought that by that you meant "Youth—as such."

Oh, no, I shouldn't say that.

Well, I think you're wrong. I should like to see more Youth in Parliament—as such—and whether they've fought in the war or not. By the way, do

we really mean that a long period of service in the trenches or the air is an essential preliminary to a political career?

Of course not! I never—

Awfully sorry, old boy. Only at one point there did seem to be a faint suggestion . . . A million apologies. I only want to get things clear. Now, the problem is, how to get youth in.

Cut down the expenses.

That won't help a lot—though it may help a bit. You can make all elections absolutely free, but the young man will still have to maintain himself after he's elected, and before he's started to earn much money, if any.

He'll have his £600 a year.

And a long way that will take him! Is he going to marry on that? No, the real reason why there are so many "elderly" men in Parliament—though this is a point that nobody mentions—is that they've reached a stage in their profession or business at which they can afford to spare some time, and money, to serve their country in Parliament—and, however little you may think of "the politicians," that is the correct way of putting it.

Certainly.

Very handsome. Well, now, the Young-man-who-fought-in-the-war, poor boy, will have no business, no profession: he'll just be starting in life. And I don't see how many of him is going to manage it in the ordinary way—unless he's somebody

like young Lord Hartington, whom you're against, anyhow. Mr. Priestley may be right when he says he's too old at fifty—I don't think so myself—but when he was twenty-five he was too poor.

Quite. You might increase the salary.

I think we should. But even then it's much better for the Young Statesman to have some background, stake, or corner in ordinary life—

If only because he may be flung out of Parliament at any moment.

Not, surely, if you go on speaking for him, old boy. However, I've got a suggestion. I don't see why you shouldn't extend the principle of the university representation—and have Young Members—under thirty—deliberately elected, as such—two by the Air Force, two by the Army, two by the Universities, two by the T.U.C., and so on. Then they wouldn't have all the expense and trouble of looking after an ordinary constituency, you see. What d'you think?

It's a new idea, certainly.

It is. And that's rather an extraordinary thing. For I'm fifty-three. A. P. H.

o o

"For Tired Eyes.—2. Cupping the eyes. . . . Close the eyes and lightly place the hands in a cupped position over the eyes. Gently press against the eyeball so that you see black. Raise the whole eye and draw slightly outward."—Beauty hint.

Don't forget to replace.



"Well, Mrs. Tobin, if we make you a partner would you do the floor AND the windows?"

At the Play

"DESERT HIGHWAY" (PLAYHOUSE)

MR. J. B. PRIESTLEY, in himself a whole regiment of dramatists ready for anything from social allegory to Yorkshire farce, has now written a play for the Army and for Service actors. Most of the Priestleys have had a hand in this military operation; but it seems, in performance, to have been largely the work of the Bruddersford man with the rich fund of character comedy (shown here in the soldiers three—*Elvin, Shaw and Hughes*) and, as Commander-in-Chief, the earnest campaigning PRIESTLEY of more recent years. There is little physical action. Six men of the Royal Armoured Corps are isolated in a desert hollow beside their broken-down tank. About them the lone and level sands stretch far away; they are hopelessly lost. Swiftly we get to know them: *Sergeant Joseph*, a Jew with some of the fervour of an Old Testament seer; *Corporal Donnington*, outwardly cynical ex-journalist; and troopers from Wales, Yorkshire, the Cockney heart of London, and—the youngest—a farm in Gloucestershire. The hollow is bombed; the farmer's boy dies of a wound; at the last curtain the noise of another aircraft is filling the sky. Ours or theirs? On that note of uncertainty the play closes.

The plot is a frame for the author's often warmly exciting plea for the brotherhood of man. This is a debate in the desert. The stranded soldiers ask why they are there. For what are they fighting? Each has his idea; at the last the brief answer would seem to be—in the words of the prophet Isaiah—to "make straight in the desert a highway for our God." PRIESTLEY places between the two acts an interlude set in the same hollow two thousand six hundred years before when Assyrians were the world's Nazis, the prophets of Jewry cried in tormented grandeur, and life was a "dark, violent dream." The parallel is not elaborated, but it is a haunting passage, unlike anything in PRIESTLEY's previous work. A Hebrew guide

overshadows the scene, a minor prophet who is rooted in the faith and who can cheer a doomed boy with tidings of Jehovah. PRIESTLEY has never written with more flame than in the speeches of the Jew. They are delivered with a controlled frenzy by Sergeant STEPHEN MURRAY, who is also the modern *Ben Joseph*, fired by racial pride. Sergeant JOHN WYSE—combining *Donnington* with an Egyptian scribe—is another much-valued professional player to be welcomed back to London; and the comedy of a voluble "old sweat"

who can say with truth: "This is I, Hamlet the Dane." It was not, then, a freakish choice to cast a distinguished dancer for one of the most taxing rôles on the English stage. Mr. HELPMANN is an imaginative actor. True, his voice lacks variety and range; his slight figure does not dominate; he is deficient in passion and poetic quality. On the other hand, his intellect is obvious, and in certain scenes, the heartbreak of the opening which displays his gift of unforced pathos, the cogently-phrased "O what a rogue and peasant slave am I!" heightened

at the end by *Hamlet's* tattoo on the players' drum, the Churchyard moralizing (though not the encounter with *Laertes*), and the last rapier-and-dagger work, he is firmly and incontestably in the mood. This may not yet be a *Hamlet* in the grand manner, but the performance wins respect and it will be better by and by.

Few Princes can have known so dim a world. Elsinore wears an inky cloak. Mr. TYRONE GUTHRIE and Mr. MICHAEL BENTHALL, the producers, and Mr. LESLIE HURRY, the scenic designer, have composed a Doubting Castle, an ominous brooding hold lit only by flashes and never seen in the plain light of day. Yet in spite of this excess of gloom the production is continuously alive from the first challenge on the battlements to the valediction of Fortinbras. There is much else to admire in the playing of the Old Vic cast: Mr. BASIL SYDNEY's *King*, a bold Renaissance villain;

Miss PAMELA BROWN's *Ophelia*, in madness eerie and extremely affecting; the precise *Polonius* of Mr. LAWRENCE HANRAY, and the nice foppery of Mr. CHARLES HICKMAN's *Osric*. The *Ghost* walks, alas, with little of the majesty of buried Denmark, and *Laertes*, *Horatio*, and the young men about the court are unremarkable, though we cannot but applaud their sure-footedness on the stairways of darkest Elsinore. J. C. T.

Noble Animal

"Fox-terrier dog, 4 months, clean, honest; 30s."—*Advt. in Leicester paper.*



THE DEBATE CONTINUES.

Cpl. Phillip Donnington SERGT. JOHN WYSE
Sergt. Ben Joseph SERGT. STEPHEN MURRAY

(Private STANLEY ROSE) and a four-square Yorkshireman (Gunner GEORGE COOPER) is vigorously direct and true. J. C. T.

"HAMLET" (NEW)

It is a temptation, when reviewing a new *Hamlet*, to compare him with a dozen predecessors. Let us get this over at once. Even if we miss from Mr. ROBERT HELPMANN's performance such notes as the infinite tenderness of Mr. Gielgud's salute to *Horatio* or the sudden splendour of Mr. Olivier in the soliloquy, "How all occasions do inform against me," the newcomer is still a Prince in his own right, a man of intelligence, pathos, quiet nobility,

Random Harvest

WHEN two people put up a black-out, the other one is a fool.

It is impossible to love those before you in a queue.

Before you sigh with relief at reaching your table in the cafeteria, go back for a knife.

Perhaps the spare clerk behind the P.O. counter is doing useful work.

Shines in your face the torch you meet: The one you hold shines where your feet Will fall—a stone's-throw up the street.

First arrivals at an accident become officials.

Those who will use the lavatory stand at the other end of the corridor.

When the bus stops, the queue starts—after it.

The man you ask for guidance is also a stranger. Sometimes he admits it.

A newspaper article is the headline in smaller and smaller print.

Quick service is now obtainable only in churches.

The sweet-makers are sorry for you, living in the Zone you do.

Troops like a cup of tea with their razor-blades.

Homes are dear to the absent but priceless to the purchaser.

Don't part with your curtain-rings: paint them and call them jewellery.

Tell your milliner it's a hat you want, not a crown.

Shop-assistants are rare, waitresses disappearing, errand-boys extinct.

Old maids. That or none.

No one knew how to cook till the Ministry of Food was set up.

It's lucky you wait at the barber's before a hair-cut or you might need another.

Second-hand bargains need first-hand knowledge.

In the reading-room, do you leave a polite interval after a reader has closed a periodical, or are you the one that gets it?

The difference between farming and agriculture is that the former is matter of fact, the latter is matter of form. The farmer gets a figure for the former, but a letter for the latter.

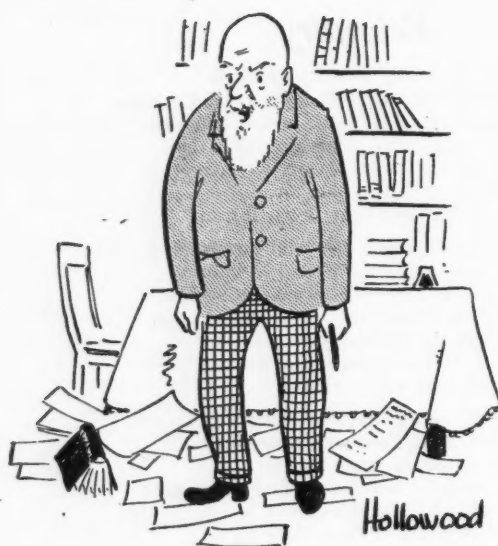
February

THIS gusty February that spins along
The indolent clouds, will it now bind for us
That winter foeman Frost? Unloose the birds' song?
See how it teases the trees, snatching their hair
And long black fingers, or tosses up a throng
Of tattling sparrows into the blue air,
And draws the blessed sunlight down for us.

Down the wind's way come the wild swans, necks taut,
Their plodding flight waking what joy in us,
What welcoming. Is this what we have sought
Out of the darkness—this sigh of reckless wings,
Last summer's sun astonishingly caught
In a green crocus; the newcomer that swings
Below the coconut and winks at us?

More than these lovely sights, wind-laughter, dances
Of tree and cloud, that February tosses us
Is the uncurling of our private fancies,
Like squirrel from bole uncertain of the sunlight;
The unleashing of light that looks out in the glances
Of eyes that for a moment turn their sight
Out of these turbulent times that compass us. M. E. R.





"Mary, where on earth is the book I was writing?
I can't have published it, can I?"

Our Booking-Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

Man in Contemporary Literature

Man and Literature (S. C. M. PRESS, 10/6) opens, somewhat abruptly, with the closing decades of the nineteenth century. Its author, Mr. NORMAN NICHOLSON, writes with enthusiasm, simplicity and, from time to time, considerable perception, but he does not appear to have much knowledge of any authors earlier than those whom he is criticizing. His book, he tells us, is "an inquiry into the assumptions as to the nature and purpose of man which underlie much of modern writing." The first of these assumptions he calls the doctrine of Liberal Man, the second the doctrine of Natural Man; and he selects H. G. Wells as the chief spokesman of Liberal Man, and D. H. Lawrence of Natural Man. His description of these two doctrines is reasonably clear. Wells, he says, conceived of man as progressing more or less inevitably towards a perfect society based on mechanical invention; and Lawrence, Aldous Huxley in his earlier phases, Hemingway and Faulkner revolted against this form of Utopianism in favour of a return to primitive life and the unchecked indulgence of impulse. But, even in these slapdash days, the origins of nineteenth-century Utopianism and twentieth-century primitivism should be summarized less expeditiously than as "doctrines of Man which have developed largely since the Renaissance"; and a writer who believes that these philosophies are on the wane should put his conviction in a more precise form than—"As against these two pagan or romantic doctrines, I see the classical and Christian conception of man re-emerging in literature." Within this rickety philosophical framework there is a good deal of lively literary criticism. Some of it one has met elsewhere. In his criticism of *A Shropshire Lad*, for example, Mr. NICHOLSON seems to find something spurious in a picture of the countryside which appeals to the "townsman or week-ender." Housman's Shropshire, he says, is a dream country, created

by the poet's imagination. One does not, however, require to be a farmer to write nature poetry, any more than one requires to be a gynacologist to write love poetry. But the connection which he suggests between Kafka's attitude to his father and his tortuous metaphysics is illuminating; his remark that Shaw is not interested in how people behave when they are alone explains why Shaw found the stage more suited to his genius than the novel; and when he says that the form of Joyce's *Ulysses* is not inherent in the subject matter he exposes the book's fundamental flaw. H. K.

Malta from Within

More charming, more intelligent and far more honest than the average war book, *Grace Under Malta* (LINDSAY DRUMMOND, 7/6) gives Miss SYBIL DOBBIE's intimate and human view of the island's fortunes from September 1940 to May 1941. In the interval there had been two thousand raids; and when Sir William Dobbie (and his wife and daughter) left Malta, "bomb out the old, bomb in the new" was the order of the day for himself and Lord Gort. The young authoress left the then safe haven of Singapore to share her father's fortunes. She became "maid-of-all-work" in his office and a whole-hearted friend of the Maltese. She paints the impact of siege conditions on their traditional life with exceptional sympathy; and her undisguised triumph when her people refuse dried milk and insist on fodder for their goats is characteristic of the womanliness which is the making of her book. Great exploits leave their mark on her pages—the repair and escape, for instance, of the *Illustrious* and the *Penelope*; and high tragedy stalks them from first to last. But comedy is not absent: witness the story of the Service stalwarts trapped by a bomb in a bar, and finally carried out on stretchers "amid reverent, if mistaken, salutes from the crowd." H. P. E.

Vergil

There is always a place for a new book on Vergil, for each age interprets him in a new way and finds in him qualities to which its predecessor was blind. Now comes Mr. W. F. JACKSON KNIGHT with *Roman Vergil* (FABER, 15/-), and, true to his times, he considers him with an historical eye. He shows us what Vergil's world was and what his life was, and from these he moves to the analysis and appreciation of his poetry. He writes with equal erudition and enthusiasm about Vergil's background and Vergil's use of the hexameter, and perhaps the best part of his book is to be found in his attempt to analyse Vergil's language. He has a fine sensibility, a boundless devotion to his subject, and a wide range of reading both in ancient and in modern literature. Not all that he says is new, and he does not claim that it is, but he has brought together a varied and interesting mass of material and, whether he embarks on anthropology or psycho-analysis, or is merely content to discuss poetry, he always has something interesting to say. He is particularly ingenious on Vergil's accounts of dreams, on his use of colours, and on the much debated "pius Aeneas." He even attacks the vast subject of Vergil's fame and influence, though perhaps here even his learning fails him, and he says nothing about the influential theories of the "immortal Vida" who laid down that all epics must follow the *Aeneid* and was respected by Camões and by Milton. Of course no book about Vergil really tells us all that we wish to know, or can explain the secret of his magic. But Mr. KNIGHT has undoubtedly done something to show why an Italian writing in the first century B.C. should still be able to move our hearts and imaginations. C. M. B.

Tales from Virginia Woolf

Even devout admirers of Virginia Woolf may be excused for not knowing her short stories. The published ones were few and fugitive: Mr. LEONARD WOOLF lists only fourteen, of which twelve are reprinted in *A Haunted House* (HOGARTH PRESS, 7/6), together with six now first published. Nearly all of them are short stories as distinct from long ones, lacking the completeness which marks the short story as a kind. Yet since Virginia Woolf was a mistress of sensibility, of poetic observation, above all of expression, hardly one is without some riches. The earliest pieces are in the vein best mined by Katherine Mansfield, and how far they are successful can only be decided by whether the reader is made to share an experience or whether, in fact, he remains outside, embarrassed rather than carried away by excess of feeling. Experiments follow: pieces such as "The Shooting Party," in which drama becomes melodrama and satire astonishingly turns into grotesque; or "The Duchess and the Jeweller," in which Mrs. Woolf can hardly conceal her discomfort with a worldly sentimental situation better suited to Mr. Somerset Maugham. On the whole the six new ones are the most satisfactory. Rough as they are—Mr. WOOLF says "at least four of them are only just in the stage beyond that of her first sketch"—they represent increasing powers, and in "The Legacy," for instance, it is of great interest to see how a familiar plot can be refreshed and enriched by an original mind. That it was the mind of a novelist, however, and not of a writer of short stories can hardly be doubted. J. S.

It Never Should Happen Again.

The famous occasion when Mr. Pecksniff said "Let us be merry!" and broke a captain's biscuit is painfully recalled in *Food Without Fuss* (FABER, 4/6), a cookery-book which endeavours to impart a similar spirit of saturnalia to war rations. This is not an easy task, for the emergency feeding of a nation which has refused to grow its own food is, necessarily, one of those things which are not well done but which it is a marvel to see done at all. We can acclaim the miracle without waxing enthusiastic about the menu. Miss JOSEPHINE TERRY would have it both ways; and she has produced over two hundred novel permutations of food-stuffs of which kippers on curried potatoes is a pretty fair sample. The first rule of cookery, however, is perfection of material, however humble; and the handling of that material should enhance and not disguise its true flavour. There are still honest native staples like stone-ground flour, potatoes, oatmeal and vegetables; and enough sugar, butter, lard and snippets of meat to ring changes on this limited peal. These things, it is pleasant to remember, will still be with us when the saccharine has gone back to the chemist and the soya bean to the soap-maker. H. P. B.

A Religious Symposium

It would be interesting to know how many readers are benefited by a religious symposium. *In Search of Faith* (Edited by E. W. MARTIN. LINDSAY DRUMMOND, 8/6) opens with "I Believe," by Bernard Shaw. "I should describe myself in the census papers as a Creative Evolutionist. In politics I am a Communist. But I am at home in all the temples. . . ." Exhilarating, though not very helpful to those who have bought this book to learn in which of the many temples of mankind the true God is worshipped. Passing on to Mr. Olaf Stapledon, one reads—"Faith? In the strict sense of the word I have no faith, and need none." This was also Dr. Joad's state during thirty years, but "when, at last, I came to take

religion off the shelf . . . the evidence seemed in favour, though not strongly, of Theism, but against the particular brand of Theism known as Christianity." The right kind of religion for these times, Dr. Joad says, is one without any doctrines, and "if anybody can stage a comeback on these lines, it is the present Archbishop of Canterbury." Sir Richard Acland appears at first sight to be more definite than Dr. Joad. His article is entitled "It Must Be Christianity," but unfortunately he makes no attempt to explain what Christianity is. The Marxist view is given by Mr. Mulk Raj Anand in "I Believe in Man." Englishmen are not included in this belief. Mr. Anand is waiting for the British bourgeoisie to be thrown out of India, and expects that after a few more adjustments of this kind "there will open out in human history a period of cultural development which would advance us from our puny infancy to a more graceful and worthy selfhood." Mr. Alec Brown is a mathematician, not a Marxist, and mathematicians may be edified by his contribution, which he concludes with "Those who still hanker after an infinite God should, I think, study relativity mathematics." Some of the contributions, notably Miss Sheila Kaye-Smith's and the Dean of St. Paul's, are thoughtful and unpretentious, but religion, like poetry, is communicated by inspired spirits, not by commentators, however sympathetic. It is symptomatic of this age that none of the contributors has advised his readers to examine the scriptures of mankind for themselves. H. K.

Black Magic

There are many striking points of contact between the "period" atmosphere of Herr LION FEUCHTWANGER's earlier historical novels and that of Hitler's Germany as he has drawn it in *The Lautensack Brothers* (HAMISH HAMILTON, 9/-); and the two men who provide the book with its title might equally well have strutted and posed and betrayed at some princeling's court of the Middle Ages. Opportunism, cruelty, luxury, greed, childish superstition contrasted with unashamed cynicism, treachery which disregards the closest ties of friendship and even of blood, and, finally, the astonishing capacity for self-deception which is not the least dangerous ingredient in the Nazi make-up—these are all exemplified in the characters and careers of the two *Lautensack* brothers. *Oscar*, the handsome clairvoyant, enjoys the brief triumph and the inevitable downfall of a tyrant's favourite. His brother *Hanns*, twisted in body and mind, is the more dangerous of the two; and, when he has to choose between family affection and self-interest the choice is a foregone conclusion. C. F. S.





"I wonder why they've invited us? The last time it was to find out where I bought my rabbits."

Our War-Time Query Corner

Ask Evangeline!

Q. What will people be able to do the day peace is declared? I noticed that a youth who came to probe into the cistern the other day sang continuously of the refreshment he intended taking when "the lights go up in London," but if prices and restrictions continue as they are, we shall be faced with the problem of making merry without the where-withal. In this household we are saving a black-currant jelly and tin of grade one salmon for a little orgy when the time comes, but others may be even less fortunately placed.

WAPPING AUNT.

A. You may rest assured that Britishers, as at the conclusion of previous wars, will find ample inspiration for a bit of good-humoured fun

without resorting to the dietetic excesses you seem to think necessary. There will not be the petrol to take them riding round London on the footboards and roofs of taxis as at Coronation time, but there is nothing to stop them sitting astride the lions in Trafalgar Square or even indulging in mixed paddling (decently conducted) in the *bassins* there. Many men feel happy and festive if they can simply get hold of a woman's hat and put it on. Women, conversely, can put on men's hats if they have not got them on already. Another bit of harmless licence, always popular at times like these, is the scaling of public monuments. The Monument proper is beyond the scope of most, but almost anyone might manage some part of the Albert Memorial or the statues of

Havelock and Napier. Along well-known bus routes, that general spirit of bonhomie engendered by years of communal waiting might find vent in some inter-queue sports, to be followed by a good game of sardines in the Tate or Foreign Office when darkness fell.

* * * * *

Q. I have been asked to lecture to the Women's Institute on "What I'm Reading Now" and have accepted, as I thought it so nice of them to ask me, but now find myself in rather a predicament. It is so difficult to say what I am reading, except that I am definitely not reading *War and Peace*. My library book, *The Great Hunger*, I have put by for the present as it seems this has nothing to do with the food situation; in fact, to be quite frank, the only

things I'm *really* reading at the moment are a Walt Whitman day-to-day calendar, which hangs, I cannot think why, in the mop and brush cupboard; a sheet of newspaper used to cover the scullery shelf, which I spell out upside-down whenever I am drying my hands on the roller towel; and a calico book, the property of my granddaughter, aged one, with the title *Bad Mrs. Ginger*—this simply describes the shady practices of a large female cat. So on what ought I to base my lecture?

"TOMMY," LADY ARDNASTRATH-MURLOCH.

A. One of the arts of public speaking, Lady "Tommy," is to make a very little go a long way. You might begin by pointing out that it is not so much what one reads that counts, as the way one reads it: that having noticed how others, through over-hasty scanning, fail to wring the fullest mental benefit from their books and periodicals, you yourself have gradually perfected a practice, uncommon here though probably not unknown in the lamaseries of Tibet, namely that of spelling out a single sentence at a time upside-down, thus following its thought, if any, with all the expectant freshness of a child commencing to read. You are under no obligation to reveal the precise nature of your own reading matter; indeed, without actually mentioning names, it is always possible, by a certain inflection in the voice, to give the impression that one has in mind either Spinoza or Schopenhauer.

Next, explain that you are going to say a word or two on the subject of feline psychology, a fascinating study which every housewife can pursue for herself within the home circle—and here, without disclosing your source, you can illustrate freely from *Bad Mrs. Ginger*. Finally, for every audience likes something concrete to take away with it, I would conclude by reading, in the virile declamatory manner Whitman would have approved, a few selected passages from your brush-cupboard calendar.

Q. I am troubled with mice in the carburettor. My car—a Saxon 1919 model which for sentimental reasons I have never liked to exchange (I first met Mrs. Bacchus whilst pushing it up the incline leading to the Brownings' villa at Fiesole)—has been standing raised on bricks since shortly after France capitulated in the garage I share with my sister's husband. Yet while Mr. Throthorp-Thring's Ford 8

remains unmolested, successive generations of house mice continue making nests of straw and chewed paper inside my bonnet, despite traps set both in and beneath the car. Why is this?

(Mr.) PERKIN C. BACCHUS.

A. Perhaps they do not realize it is a car. In any case, unless the little creatures are causing the contents of your bonnet to deteriorate (which I should hardly think possible from what you say), why adopt a dog-in-the-mangerish attitude? You cannot use the car yourself if you have no petrol; then let those make use of it who can.

Q. It is my belief that the world will never be a particularly happy place to live in until the leaders of the free peoples recover their faith in fairies. That this war is in reality a cosmic device for urging them in that direction seems clear to me from the fact that "gremlin" is already a household word. What, in your opinion, will be the main characteristics of our post-war fairy folk as distinct from the kind you and I already know?

(Mrs.) CHRISTABEL SMALLCALF.

A. I doubt whether we really do know the same ones, Mrs. Smallcalf; however, as far as characteristics go, I certainly think that fairies, like everything else, will have to move with the times. For male fairies to continue going about in mediæval jerkin and hose is simply a piece of reactionary perverseness. How very much more appropriate would be a tiny shimmering boiler-suit or pair of dungarees covered with spangles, worn with a wee luminous bowler hat. As for the old-time sub-divisions, I dare say we shall find these reorganizing themselves into petrol pixies, electricity elves, ignition imps, kinema kelpies, subway sprites, and so on. The whole lot of them will need to speed up too if they want to keep pace with modern trends—no more airy tripping or quaint mazes.

Q. I am new to Guiding and have received from our district secretary instructions *re* a forthcoming parade which read: "Guides must endeavour to keep to regulation uniform, though in special cases anything which constitutes a hat may be worn." Can you tell me what kinds of things constitute hats, besides hats?

ALICE BUNN (Miss).

A. To mention only a few, I feel

certain I have seen in my time large fish-baskets, slightly battered satin tea-cosies, horses' nose-bags and a fur muff with the moth in it all being utilized as hats. Only the other day a well-known society hostess was seen about town in a sea-gull. It was thought that the creature had made a forced landing until a closer view revealed the realistically wire-stiffened wings and rudder. A further charmingly novel note was struck in the dressing of the hair to resemble a bird's nest. However, I would have to know more about the function you propose attending before I could say which of the above might be suitable wear.

Q. I fancy I am not alone in my opinion that considerably more might have been done in this war for those middle-aged gentlemen with educated palates to whom a babooty curry is not the same thing as a croustade. I am not a fussy man but, quite frankly, I find I am being starved. I do not ask anything elaborate—I am prepared to eat any good fish, meat or game for breakfast, lunch and supper alike; eggs I can take in any reasonable form—yet my daughter appears to be unable to provide me with sufficient to keep body and soul together. What is the reason?

INDIGNANT RATE-PAYER.

A. It sounds to us as though you were not getting your rations. Ideally you ought by now to have in your possession a pale fawn, limp-backed booklet containing pages ruled off into small rectangular spaces, each marked either with one of the Arabic numerals or with a letter of the alphabet. This is known as a "ration-book" and is issued by the Ministry of Food. The idea is that one comes to an understanding with one's favourite grocer, butcher and milkman (this is called "registering") and allows these persons to cut out, or else make marks upon, the rectangular spaces referred to in return for numerous little parcels of butter, sugar, mutton, etc. Call in at your Local Food Office and I dare say that in a week or so you will be happily receiving your rations like the rest.

Announcer's Waterloo

WITH never a cough
In a voice like butter
He started off
Smooth words to utter;
Then he came to Pskov,
And he stopped to psplutter.

Static Serenade

WE are a "Mixed Mess" of forgotten officers, inhabitants of a forgotten castle in a forgotten Command.

Once a year throughout the whole area of square feet per man the dead stillness is broken by the sound of a great rustling. It is the noise made by the old elephants passing through the forests of paper on their way to die at Command Headquarters.

In olden days all sorts of enterprising and beribboned travellers used to hack their way through to us. Often they brought with them a number of wares for sale: Traps, grease, fly, and mouse; equipment P.T.; diascopes—epi; rat bane; garden seeds and many other dazzling goods.

At last, however, Nature has won the unequal contest, she has covered us with her protective clothing and we are completely submerged. Robins have nested in our "Utility" Truck, the wild rose and ivy have covered the great south entrance, while spiders have woven their webs across the last emergency exit. No one from the rude outer world ever wins through to the rarefied atmosphere of our communal life.

In our khaki solitude we have developed a culture of our own.

All through the dank summer evenings and the ice-cold winter nights we have wrestled shoulder to shoulder over such problems as "The Future of Germany under Amgot," "Monogamy," "Polygamy," "Cause

and Effect of ABCA" (mostly effect), "The Regular Soldier, God bless him," and "Equality for the Sexes" (the wrestling here was tooth to tooth and nail to nail).

Of all topics which have thus been explored and exploded one alone remains, tantalizing and ever new—one which never fails to draw the most silent. The rhythm goes something like this:

The Girl Subaltern. I suppose the 12.20 to London is still running?

The Mad Major. That's an impossible one to go by; you have to change at X and Y; I always go by the 0930.

The Adjutant and Q.M. When I was at Armanugga I always indented for a sleeper. . . .

The Lawyer Captain. Coming up from Cornwall by the 12.3 I only changed once, and got the most excellent lunch on the 1.30.

The Junior Captain. The 1.30 is a grand train, it gets up a terrific speed. I remember when I caught it at Exeter after coming by that slow 8.20 from Shrewsbury via Templecombe—

The Mad Major. Why you should go to Exeter via Templecombe by the 8.20 when there is a perfectly good train at eleven which goes straight through to Falmouth, I don't know.

The Lawyer Captain. But you can't get a meal on that train, whereas on the 4.30 . . .

The Adjutant and Q.M. Well, the last good meal I ever had was on the 12.55 soon after I left Armanugga.

I'd just passed Suli-Patam's tomb when . . .

The Girl Subaltern. But is the twelve—?

The Junior Captain. Far the best way is by Newcastle. The fastest is the 12.45 with the Silver Bullet. . . .

The Lawyer Captain. What is the good of a fast train if your food gets thrown about?

The Mad Major. You can beat the Silver Bullet easily if you take the 0800 from Liverpool, change at X, take the 1342, change again at Y, then the 1500, which gets you in to S at 1741.

The Girl Subaltern (taking up the telephone). Is that the R.T.O.? Is the 1220 still running? . . . There isn't one. Oh! Is the 0930 still running? . . . There isn't one. Oh! What is there then? . . . The 1103. Oh, dear . . . I say, you people—what time is it?

A row of watches appear for inspection:

"1055½ exactly!"

"1020. Elephant-hide, this strap is!"

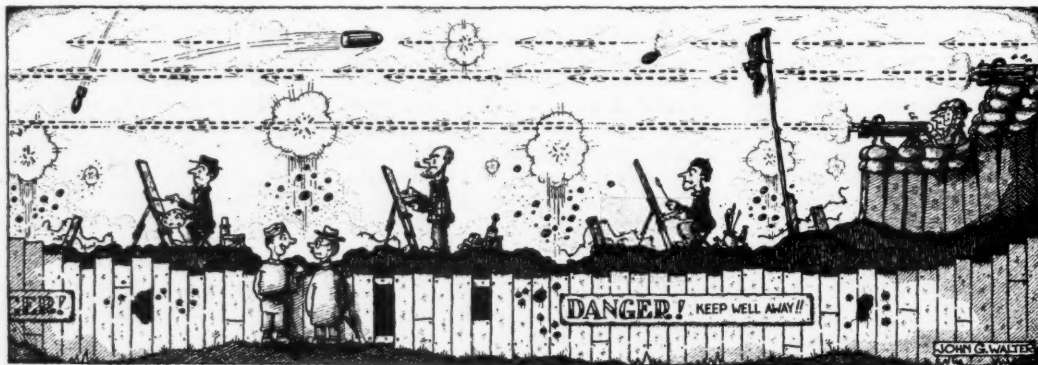
"1045. Just on time for elevenses!"

"1115. My goodness, it's gaining!"

"Oh, well, I suppose I've missed it again."

The winds howl and whistle round the building. A faint trumpeting is heard in the forest; some sheets of paper marked A.F. 157 blow against the window-panes and are gone.

The night closes around us as the conversation ebbs and flows round the train service to Aberdeen.



"It's a battle-course for official war artists."

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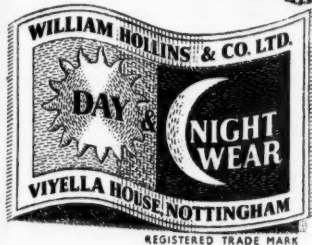
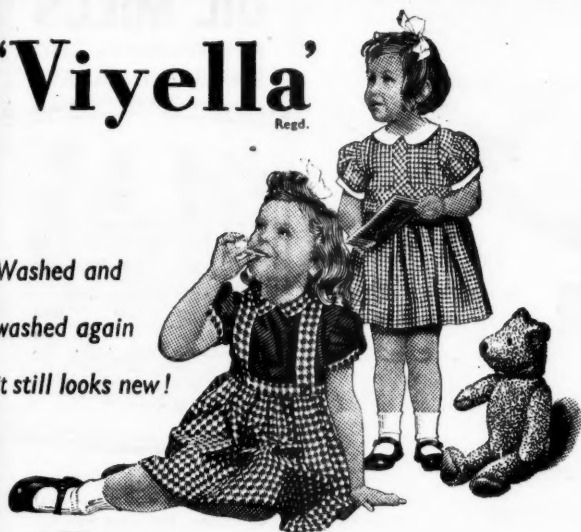
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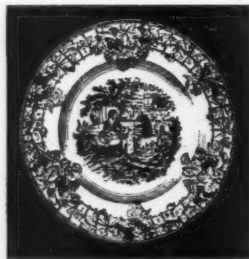
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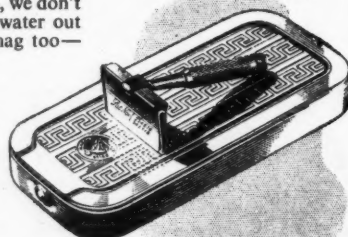
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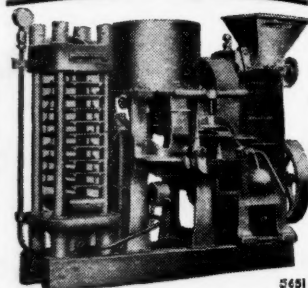
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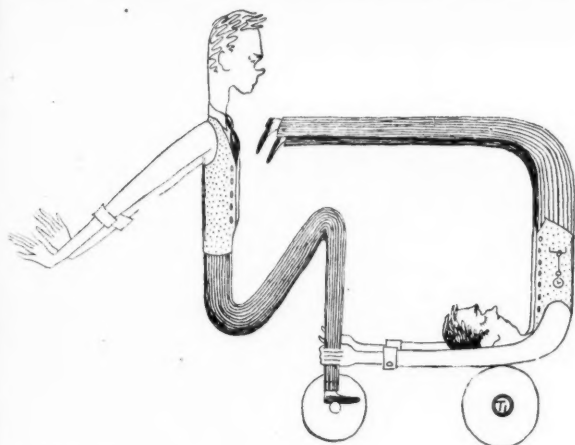


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